

Effective Meetings

Effective meetings are about management. This handout will give you some pointers on how to create an agenda, get others involved, and prepare for the next meeting. In the end, only you know what works best for your team. Effective meeting planning is a skill and whatever method works for you is the right one.

Concepts

4 magical concepts in meeting planning:

- Achieve the meeting objective
- Use a minimum amount of time
- Leave participants feeling that a sensible process has been followed
- Receive group participation

To be successful, create a meeting objective. What is a meeting objective? Think of it like this, “At the close of the meeting, I want the group to...”

- have made a decision
- have generated ideas for...
- report on future or past events
- have made plans for XYZ

Use time wisely. This can be done by creating an agenda so your meeting has direction and group members stay on-task. Some things to consider are:

- Time is a precious resource and no one wants theirs wasted
- Start and end on time
- Time wasted in a meeting is time wasted for everyone attending

Use Time Wisely

Save time! Encourage members to come prepared. If it's a meeting to solve a problem or create ideas, ask participants to come prepared with ideas and/or solutions. If you are discussing an ongoing project, have each participant summarize his or her progress before the meeting and circulate reports to members.

Share the responsibility. Assign a particular topic of discussion to various people to increase involvement and interest. Don't do all the talking yourself and on the agenda, indicate who will lead the discussion or presentation of each item.

Respect. Insist that everyone honor the time allotted. Start your meeting on time. Do not recap what was already discussed for latecomers. It's their responsibility to find out information that was discussed through the meeting minutes or after the event from other participants. Finish on time. Remember, whatever can be done outside the meeting time should be. This includes circulating reports for people to read beforehand and assigning smaller group meetings to discuss issues relevant to only certain people.

Fun Fact: There are 525,600 minutes in a year. Always remember that minutes matter but moments count.